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UNCLAS HELSINKI 000948

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SUBJECT: GOF RESPONSE ON IRAQ CONSTITUTION

REF: STATE 158420

1. DCM met September 1 with Finnish MFA Undersecretary for Political Affairs Markus Lyra to discuss the GOF's public response to the Iraqi draft constitution and to request a public statement supporting the democratization process in Iraq. She noted that the foreign ministers from the five Nordic countries had made a very positive joint statement in support of Iraqi democracy in June at the time of the Iraq conference in Brussels, and that we hoped the GOF would see presentation the draft constitution as another opportunity to show support for the Iraqi people.

2. Lyra responded by emphasizing that the GOF remained very supportive of the process in Iraq. While Iraq is not on the official agenda for the Sept. 1-2 Gymnich meeting in Wales, the issue of the Iraqi constitution was sure to be discussed in that forum, Lyra said, and he expected that the ministers would make a positive statement along the lines of what we had suggested. He also acknowledged the statement made by the UK in its capacity as EU presidency as well and said that the GOF generally supported it. Lyra stopped short of committing the foreign minister to issuing a statement but said that he would raise the issue with him on his return from Wales.

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